

Amendments to the Claims:

The present listing of the claims replaces all past listings of the claims:

Listing of claims:

12. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a hot-melt pressure sensitive adhesive comprising polymerizing polyacrylate precursor monomers in an aqueous dispersion to yield a concentrated aqueous dispersion comprising between 68-87% by weight of the concentrated aqueous dispersion of gel-free, molecularly-dispersed, meltable polyacrylate particles having an at least bimodal size distribution in size ranges between 0.5µm and 1000 µm Ø.

13. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim 12, wherein the monomers are comprises:

a) a total of 60-99.5% by weight based on the a total weight of ~~one or more~~ monomers of (meth)acrylic esters with C4-C-12 ester radicals ~~alone or~~;

b) ~~in admixture with~~ 0-10% by weight based on the total weight of ~~one or more~~ monomers of (meth)acrylic acid or methacrylamide, and

c) up to 40% by weight based on the total weight of monomers of one or more hardening monomers.

14. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 13, wherein the one or more hardening monomers are selected from the group consisting of (meth)acrylic C1-C3 esters, vinyl C1-C3 esters, styrene and other copolymerizable monomers having functional groups of thermal stability sufficient to survive the process.

15. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 12, wherein the polymerizing polyacrylate precursor monomers in aqueous dispersion is conducted in the presence of one or more stabilizers present in said aqueous dispersion in a concentration of up to 4% by weight based on the total weight of the aqueous dispersion, and the one or more stabilizers are selected from the group consisting of water-soluble substances which are stable at a melting temperature of the polyacrylate and nonionic and anionic low-foam emulsifiers.

16. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim 15, wherein the ~~water-soluable~~ water-soluble substances which are stable at a melting temperature of the polyacrylate are selected from the group consisting of short-chain polymers which carry amide groups.

17. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 12, wherein the polymerizing polyacrylate precursor monomers in aqueous dispersion is conducted in the presence of one or more polyacrylate chain-length-regulating substances present in amounts of up to 10% by weight based on the weight of the polyacrylate.

18. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 17, wherein the one or more polyacrylate chain-length-regulating substances are selected from the group consisting of vinyl ethers, fumaric esters, maleic esters, styrene and hydrophilic rosins.

19. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 12, wherein the polymerizing polyacrylate precursor monomers in aqueous dispersion is conducted in the presence of one or more linearly polymerizing, water-insoluble initiators which are soluble in the monomers in amounts of up to 1% by weight based on the weight of the monomers.

20. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 19, wherein the initiators are azo initiators.

21. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 12, wherein the polyacrylate is soluble without gel in an organic solvent and has a relative viscosity at 25°C in toluene of 1680-5000 and a melting range between 80°C and 170°C.

22. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 12, which further comprises a) dewatering the concentrated aqueous dispersion to form a homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt, and b) filming the homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt to form a film by pressing the homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt through a slot die.

23. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim 22, ~~which further comprises a) dewatering~~ wherein the concentrated aqueous dispersion is dewatered in a kneading device or extruder having a devolatilizing means operating at a temperature between 90-160°C to form a the homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt, or b) ~~filming~~ the homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt is filmed to form a film by pressing the homogeneous, molecularly-disperse polyacrylate melt through a slot die by means of toothed wheel pumps and/or extruder screws.

24. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein prior to dewatering, one or more natural rubber lattices or synthetic rubber lattices are added to the concentrated aqueous dispersion in amounts of up to 70% by weight based on the polyacrylate, and/or before or after the dewatering, one or more inorganic fillers are added to the concentrated aqueous dispersion in amounts up to 40% by weight based on the polyacrylate and/or one or more polyacrylate-compatible plasticizers are added to the concentrated aqueous dispersion in amounts

up to 30% by weight based on the polyacrylate.

25. (Currently Amended) The process according to Claim 22, wherein after dewatering, one or more tackifier resins are added to the concentrated aqueous dispersion in amounts up to 50% by weight based on overall polymer or up to 35% by ~~weight~~ weight based on the polyacrylate.

26. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 25, wherein the one or more tackifier resins are selected from the group consisting of hydrocarbons having aromatic fractions.

27. (Previously Presented) The process according to Claim 22, wherein after dewatering, one or more UV photoinitiators are added to the concentrated aqueous dispersion and/or incorporated into the polyacrylate by copolymerization in amounts of up to 2% by weight of the polyacrylate, and/or one or more polyunsaturated (meth)acrylic monomers are incorporated into the polyacrylate by copolymerization in amounts up to 5% by weight of the polyacrylate, and the film is crosslinked by subjecting the film to 2-10 J/cm² UV radiation and/or 10-100 kGy electron beams to yield an insoluble of up to 95% by weight acrylic polymer.

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Applicants: Peter Gleichenhagen et al.

Amendment in Response to Office Action dated December 4, 2003

28. (Previously Presented) The product produced by the process of Claim 12.

29. (Previously Presented) An adhesive tape comprising a backing and the product
according to Claim 28 coated on one or both sides of said backing.

30. (Previously Presented) A method of producing an adhesive tape according to
Claim 29 comprising:

- a) producing a hot-melt pressure sensitive adhesive according to the process of
 Claim 12; and
- b) coating a backing on one or both sides thereof with said hot-melt pressure
 sensitive adhesive.

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CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

If entry and consideration of the amendments above requires an extension of time, Applicants respectfully request that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee(s) due in this connection to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

ADDITIONAL FEE

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess, to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.